

The San Francisco Office of Early care and Education (OECE) COVID-19 Shelter-In-Place

Emergency 0-5 Child Care System

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from Funded Programs

In an effort to maintain consistent information to all licensed early care and education facilities, currently funded by OECE, we have compiled a list of questions from family child care and center related to closure due to this health crisis.

Question: Are all child care facilities considered Essential Businesses?

Answer: All child care facilities are not considered Essential Businesses. The Shelter-in-place Order allows child care facilities to operate to support employees who are permitted to work by the Order. Child care operators are not expected to confirm if all children they care for are from Essential Worker Families permitted by the Order, but they should indicate to the parents that spaces are limited to those Essential Workers permitted (i.e., excluded from Shelter-in-place) to work under the Order.

Question: If I close my program due to COVID-19, do I continue to receive city funding?

Answer: Yes. ELS payments for all city-funded children enrolled at your site at the time of closure will continue through May 31st. Any extensions to this funding will be determined by and is at the sole discretion of the San Francisco Controller's Office.

Question: When can I reopen?

Answer: Under the SF Department of Public Health's most recent extension to the shelter-in-place order, starting on May 4th, **child care programs may open to provide care for the children of owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors working in Essential Businesses, Essential Governmental Functions, Outdoor Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations** as defined in section 16 of [the order](#). To the extent possible, child care programs that choose to re-open must comply with the following conditions:

1. They must be carried out in stable groups of 10 or fewer children ("stable" means that the same 10 or fewer children are in the same group each day) as currently [required by California State Child Care Licensing](#).
2. Children shall not change from one group to another.
3. If more than one group of children is at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
4. Providers or educators shall remain solely with one group of children.

If you are a program owner or administrator interested in reopening to serve the children of those working in the categories described above, please contact Denise Corvino at denise.corvino@sfgov.org. Otherwise, per the order, your program should remain closed and children should stay home.

Question: If my program remains open or re-opens to serve children of those allowed to work under the Order, do I have to strictly comply with all requirements listed in [Department of Public Health's Shelter-in-place Order?](#)

Answer: Yes. Child care programs must operate under the listed conditions to the extent possible, but the Order allows them to continue to operate even if they are unable to achieve perfect compliance. The listed requirements outlined in the [San Francisco Department of Public Health's Emergency Childcare Guidance](#) should be complied with to the extent possible.

Question: If I choose to remain closed, will my closure days count against my 15 days of paid holidays for ELS funding?

Answer: No. These days do not count against the 15 paid holidays for ELS funding.

Question: If some or all of my children receive State funded AP Vouchers (CalWORKs or CAPP) or Title 5 funding will I continue to receive ELS funding?

Answer: While OECE will continue to provide the ELS Gap funding at your current funding amount through May 31st, for Title 5 and AP Voucher (i.e., CalWORKs and CAPP) payments, state policy applies. The state issued payment and family fee guidance in [MB 20-05](#).

Question: During my closure, do I still collect Family Fees from parents, and if not will I receive that funding as part of my ELS emergency closure payments?

Answer:

- Please do not collect family fees for ELS Voucher and Reserved families, starting March. OECE will cover the Family Fees as part of your ELS payment for March through May 31st; any extensions to this funding will be determined by and is at the sole discretion of the San Francisco Controller's Office.
- For tuition-based families without ELS/PFA financial assistance, please follow your tuition policy.
- For programs serving families who are state funded through Title 5 or have an AP Voucher (i.e., CalWORKs and CAPP) the State issued a directive [in MB 20-05](#). Effective April 1, 2020, programs must not impose or collect family fees for Early Learning services for the months of April through June 2020. The waiver of family fees for parents will not affect the amounts paid to providers, as

contractors will reimburse providers for the full amount of the certificate or voucher without deducting family fees.

Question: What if I have already collected a Family Fee for March, 2020 for an ELS Voucher or Reserved Family?

Answer: Please reimburse the ELS Voucher/Reserved family their full Family Fee payment as you will receive that Family Fee as part of your March payments and this will continue through May 31st; any extensions to this funding will be determined by and is at the sole discretion of the San Francisco Controller's Office. For programs serving families who are state funded programs, [MB 20-05](#) indicates that for the months of April, May, and June 2020, all family fees are waived. Fees paid for March services, will not be credited or refunded. Please consult the [MB 20-05](#) for more specific information.

Question: I have closed due to the DPH Shelter-in-Place Order, how do I record attendance and who will pay me during this closure period?

Answer:

- **For Cocoa (Title 5, ELS Reserved, PFA) attendance** - Please follow the step-by-step instructions from Children's Council via [this LINK](#). Children's Council will continue to pay you based on your Cocoa reporting.
- **For AP Voucher (CAPP, CalWORKs) attendance** - No attendance record is necessary during the DPH Order. Children's Council will pay you according to your existing certified enrollments (i.e., those enrolled at the time of closure).
 - [ACL 3-19](#): "*Providers who are closed due to COVID-19 and are not able to submit their monthly attendance record or invoice shall be reimbursed based on the total certified authorizations, either part-time or full-time. License-exempt providers shall also be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care.*"
- **For ELS Voucher attendance** - No attendance record is necessary during the DPH Order. Children's Council and Wu Yee will pay you based on your existing certified enrollments.

Question: Will families be allowed to use non-ELS programs as backup during my program closure?

Answer: No. Currently, city funding does not fund non-ELS programs.

Question: Will local funding for early care and education be impacted next fiscal year?

Answer: OECE remains highly committed in supporting San Francisco's Early Care & Education system during these challenging and uncertain times. All city departments are waiting for budget instructions from the Mayor's Office, expected mid-May. The Controller reported the

city is facing a \$1.7 billion deficit and all departments warned of imminent reductions to budgets. We acknowledge and empathize that the lack of funding information makes it difficult to plan for next year, given the many uncertainties we are all facing. OECE will provide updates to our funded-partners and the community as more information becomes available.

Question: What other helpful sources of information should I be aware of besides [OECE](#)?

Answer:

- To apply for cash, medical and food assistance families can go to www.mybenefitscalwin.org or contact the [San Francisco Human Services Agency](#)
- [The San Francisco Department of Public Health](#)
- [California Department of Social Service](#)
- [California Department of Education](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - School Closures](#)

